

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **SITE SPECIFIC: SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS (SJRWP) SUPERFUND SITE**

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#### **EPA Contacts for SJRWP Site Concerns:**

[http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san\\_jacinto/contacts.html](http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san_jacinto/contacts.html)

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#### **1. Who is responsible for the cleanup of the site contamination?**

The Potentially Responsible Parties for the site will be responsible for cleanup of the site. The current site Potentially Responsible Parties are: McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation and International Paper Company.

#### **2. What is the extent of the contamination that was released from the waste pits? What is the site remedial investigation?**

The extent of contamination released from the waste pits is still under investigation. However, preliminary data indicate that contamination of the mud within the San Jacinto River extends about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile both north and south of the waste pits, although at low levels outside of the waste pits. The soil adjacent to the river has not been contaminated, nor has the groundwater except for the shallow groundwater just below the waste pits; however, this shallow groundwater is salt water.

The site remedial investigation is an investigation to identify the nature and extent of all site contamination. This is done by gathering and analyzing environmental samples from locations at and around the site. It also involves site risk assessments. The SJRWP site remedial investigation is planned for completion before the end of 2012.

Information on the site remedial investigation can be found in the presentation materials from the SJRWP Community Engagement Initiative public meeting, held on September 22, 2011, and here: [http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san\\_jacinto/ri\\_fs.html](http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san_jacinto/ri_fs.html)

#### **3. What happens after the site remedial investigation? What is the site feasibility study?**

After the nature and extent of all site contamination is identified, EPA will evaluate remedial action alternatives to address that contamination. This evaluation is called the feasibility study. The SJRWP site feasibility study is planned for completion before the end of 2013.

Information on possible remedial action alternatives can be found here: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/community/publications.htm#guides>

#### **4. How does EPA determine site cleanup goals? What are site risk assessments?**

The site risk assessments are evaluations of human health and ecological risks posed by a site in the absence of any site remedial action. It evaluates environmental data (such as site sampling data), remedial goals, toxicity data, exposure assumptions, and regulatory guidelines, to determine unacceptable human health and ecological risks from the site. These unacceptable risks from the site would then need to be addressed.

**5. Do the site risk assessments evaluate site-related health problems?**

No, that is a site Public Health Assessment (PHA) and is completed by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and Texas Department of State Health Services.

The PHA determines if site exposure has or will occur by evaluating health effects information, pathways information, and community health concerns. The PHA then recommends actions to protect public health. Additional information can be found on the ATSDR Comparison of Public Health Assessments and Risk Assessments fact sheet.

Information on all PHAs in Texas, including the PHA for the site, can be found here:  
<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hac/pha/HCPHA.asp?State=TX>

**6. Is the current cap the final remedy for the site?**

The final remedy for the site has not been determined yet. The EPA follows a specific process that first identifies the nature and extent of the contamination from the site. Then, the EPA evaluates the feasibility of various remedial action alternatives for the final remedy. The public will be involved and be offered an opportunity to provide comments before any final remedy is selected.

**7. What happens if a hurricane or flood arrives at the same location as the site?**

Site inspections are conducted regularly, including after adverse weather events, to ensure the integrity of all site cleanup actions (such as the current cap). Within 24 hours following a flood, an inspection of the cap will be done. A stockpile of repair materials is located nearby, and any needed repairs will be completed within 48 hours.

**8. Who is responsible for putting up public warning signs and no trespassing signs at the site?**

The site Potentially Responsible Parties are responsible for the warning signs at the site. They are currently: McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation and International Paper Company.

**9. Who is responsible for putting up public warning signs and no trespassing signs beyond the site?**

Any signage on private or public property beyond the site is the responsibility of the owner of that property. In the case of public property, that responsibility primarily belongs to the governmental entity responsible for administering or maintaining that property.

**10. Who is responsible for sampling private and public water wells around the site?**

Sampling private and public water wells is the responsibility of the owner of that water well.

For cases where the extent of site contamination involves private or public water wells, the EPA can take protective measures such as sampling and providing drinkable water for the community. However, that is not the case with this site.

Information on the current extent of site contamination can be found in the presentation materials from the SJRWP Community Engagement Initiative public meeting, held on September 22, 2011.

**11. Who is responsible for the change in property values around the site?**

Property values fluctuate due to a variety of factors that vary by property and are usually not attributable to a single source.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WATERSHED: SAN JACINTO RIVER, HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL, GALVESTON BAY**

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#### **EPA Contacts for Watershed Concerns:**

Ecosystems Protection: <http://www.epa.gov/region6/water/ecopro/index.htm>

TMDL: <http://www.epa.gov/region6/water/npdes/tmdl/contacts.htm>

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#### **1. Who is responsible for developing the consumption advisories for San Jacinto River, Houston Ship Channel, and Galveston Bay?**

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) develops and maintains all consumption advisories and bans in Texas, including: San Jacinto River, Houston Ship Channel, and Galveston Bay.

Information on Texas consumption advisories and bans can be found here:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood/survey.shtm>

#### **2. How are the consumption advisories or bans enforced? Are penalties in place?**

From the Texas DSHS website: “Eating fish from an area with a consumption advisory is not illegal, but people should not eat more fish than the amount listed in the advisory. In instances where a serious or imminent threat to public health exists, the DSHS may prohibit the taking of fish and shellfish from an area. Taking fish from a closed area where a fish consumption ban is in effect is a violation of state law, enforced by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.”

Information on all consumption advisories and bans can be found here:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood/survey.shtm>

#### **3. Dioxin contamination is identified in the consumption advisories for the watershed. How will this be addressed for San Jacinto River, Houston Ship Channel, and Galveston Bay?**

A dioxin total maximum daily load (TMDL) project has been underway since 2001 to determine the prescriptive measures necessary to restore water quality in water bodies affected by the consumption advisories in the Houston Ship Channel and Upper Galveston Bay.

This dioxin TMDL project will eventually determine the amount (or load) of dioxin that a body of water can receive and still support its designated use of recreation, fishing, navigation, industrial water supply, and/or aquatic life. This allowable dioxin load is then allocated among all the potential sources of pollution within the watershed and then, if necessary, measures to reduce this load will be developed.

Information on how the public can participate in the dioxin TMDL can be found here:

<http://www.h-gac.com/dioxintmdl>

Information on the dioxin TMDL can be found here:

<http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl/26-hscdioxin.html>

**4. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) contamination is identified in the consumption advisories for the watershed. How will this be addressed for San Jacinto River, Houston Ship Channel, and Galveston Bay?**

The EPA and TCEQ are working together to address these issues.

Information on how the public can participate can be found here:

<http://www.h-gac.com/community/water/tmdl>

Information on all Texas TMDLs can be found here:

<http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl>

**5. Organochlorine pesticides contamination is identified in the consumption advisories for the watershed. How will this be addressed for San Jacinto River, Houston Ship Channel, and Galveston Bay?**

The EPA and TCEQ are working together to address these issues.

Information on how the public can participate can be found here:

<http://www.h-gac.com/community/water/tmdl>

Information on all Texas TMDLs can be found here:

<http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl>

**6. What is being done to ensure the water and sediment in watershed areas affected by the consumption advisories are monitored or cleaned up?**

The EPA and TCEQ are working together to address these issues.

Information on how the public can participate can be found here:

<http://www.h-gac.com/community/water/tmdl>

Information on all Texas TMDLs can be found here:

<http://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/tmdl>

**7. Who is responsible for putting up public warning signs and no trespassing signs in the watershed (San Jacinto River, Houston Ship Channel, Galveston Bay)?**

Any signage on private or public property in the watershed is the responsibility of the owner of that property. In the case of public property, that responsibility primarily belongs to the governmental entity responsible for administering or maintaining that property.

Warning signs have been placed in various areas in the San Jacinto River by local organizations to provide notification regarding the fish consumption advisories.